

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 DACCA 01115 241130Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-06 PA-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

/029 W

-----015054 241132Z /10

P R 231006Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8191
CINCPAC

UNCLAS DACCA 1115

USIAC

CINCPAC FOR USIA ADVISOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT : MUHAMMAD ALI VISIT

1. U.S. BOXER MUHAMMAD ALI'S FIVE-DAY VISIT TO BANGLADESH STARTING FEBRUARY 18, 1978, SURPASSED ALL VISITS OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES OR STATE HEADS TO THIS COUNTRY IN RECENT PAST, IN TERMS OF WIDE COVERAGE BY MEDIA. NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS STARTED FRONT PAGE DISPLAY OF ALI'S VISIT WELL AHEAD OF THE EVENT. GOVERNMENT MANAGED BDTIMES EXPRESSED ENTHUSIASM OF PEOPLE IN A FRONT PAGE PICTURE-CAPTION: "WITH PMSTERS, FESTOONS AND BUNTINGS SPLASHING ALL OVER DACCA, CAPITAL OF WORLD'S SEVENTH LARGEST NATION IS IN GRIP OF MUHAMMAD ALI FEVER AND IS ANXIOUSLY WAITING TO GREET 'HERO OF RING' TODAY."

2. BD PRESS REFLECTED SHOCK OF BANGLADESHIS AT THE 'UNEXPECTED DEFEAT' OF MUHAMMAD ALI SIDE BY SIDE WITH EAGER AWAITING FOR ARRIVAL OF BOXING HERO. BDOBSERVER (FEB.17) FRONDED 2/C HEADLINE: "ALI DETHRONED." BDTIMES PUBLISHED FRONTPAGE REPORT WITH HEADING "WAVES UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 DACCA 01115 241130Z

"OF SHOCK" AS REACTION OF PUBLIC ON ALI'S DEFEAT TO INEXPERIENCED LEON SPINKS IN LAS VEGAS FIGHT PRIOR TO ALI'S DEPARTURE FOR BANGLADESH. ALL DAILIES FRONDED ITEM. MPOST (FEB.18) MADE SECOND HEAD 2/C HEADLINE: "MASSIVE WELCOME AWAITS ALI." BIOGRAPHICAL RELEASE ISSUED BY USIS WAS USED BY MOST. DBANGLA MADE 5/C BOX WITH CAPTION "TIRED BUTTERFLY", GIVING A CHRONOLOGICAL

REPORT ON ALI'S BOXING CAREER.

3. MOST PAPER MADE LEAD ITEMS WITH HEADLINES: "WELCOME MUHAMMAD API" ON HIS ARRIVAL-DAY (FEB.18). AZAD CAME OUT WITH BIG, SPECIAL-TYPE 3/C LEAD: "GREATEST BOXER OF ALL TIMES, REMARKABLE WORLD PERSONALITY MUHAMMAD ALI COMING TODAY." TWO COLUMN PICTURE OF ALI ACCOMPANIED STORY. WITH WELCOME REPORT, MOST PUBLISHED EDITS WELCOMING 'BOXING HERO' AND CONSOLING HIM ON HIS LATEST DEFEAT. ALI'S ARRIVAL REPORT ALONG WIHH NUMEROUS PICTURES WAS MADE LEAD NEWS BY ALL DAILIES. TV ARRANGED SPECIAL MORNING TRANSMISSION FOR DIRECT COVERAGE OF ALI'S ARRIVAL. RADIO ALSO ARRANGED ON-THE-SPOT RUNNING COMMENTARY. ALI'S AIRPORT STATEMENT SAYING, "I WILL REGAIN TITLE IN SIX MONTHS" TOPPED THE HEADINGS ON HIS DACCA ARRIVAL. SOME HEADLINED "DACCA ACCORDS TUMULTUOUS WELCOME TO MUHAMMAD ALI." ARRIVAL REPORTS ALSO INCLUDED AIRPORT INTERVIEWS OF ALI'S MOTHER MRS. CLAY SAYING, "I AM PROUD OF MY SON" AND HIS WIFE MRS. VERONICA SAYING, "HE IS A GIANT". WERE PROMCARRIED WIDEST NEWS AND PICTORIAL COVERAGE OF ALI'S ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION WAS GIVEN BY DBANGLA WITH FULL UPPER-HALF OF FRONT PAGE GIVEN TO RELATED ITEMS AND PICTURES. IT'S BIG-TYPE HEADLINE READ: "ALI CAME AND ALI CONQUERED."

4. DURING MUHAMMAD ALI'S FIVE-DAY STAY IN BANGLADESH,
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 DACCA 01115 241130Z

DAILIES AND WEEKLIES WERE FLOODED WITH NEWS ITEMS, PICTURES AND COMMENTS ON THE U.S. BOXER'S ACTIVITIES IN DACCA, CHITTAGONG AND SYPHET. BD PRESIDENT'S CONFERRING 'CITIZENSHIP' ON API WAS PROMCARRIED. RELIGIOUS ORIENTED SANGRAM (FEB. 19) LED WITH 4/C HEADLINE: "PRIDE OF MUSLIM WORLD MUHAMMAD ALI BECOMES CITIZEN OF BANGLADESH." DACCA CIVIC RECEPTION WAS ALSO MADE LEAD BY ALL. SANGRAM MADE A 4/C LEAD, ALI SAYING IN RECEPTION, "SUCCESS IN MY LIFE WAS DUE TO THE COMPLETE FAITH ON ALLAH." AZAD LED ON THE OCCASION QUOTING HOST OFFICIALS SAYING, "SYMPATHIZER OF MANKIND MUHAMMAD ALI, YOU ARE OUR PRIDE." ALI'S STATEMENT SAYING HE "WILL STAY TWO MONTHS A YEAR IN HIS COX'S BAZAR HOME" WAS PROMCARRIED.

5. ALL PAPERS WERE FLOODED WITH PICTURES DURING ALI'S VISIT. SOME PUBLISHED PHOTO-FEATURES WITH UP TO 10 PICTURES ON ALI'S DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES.

6. COMMENTS IN FORM OF EDITORIALS AND SPECIAL EDITPAGE COLUMNS WERE WIDELY PUBLISHED BY MEDIA. DBANGLA AND AZAD IN THEIR EDITORIAL WELCOMING ALI SAID THAT WHETHER ALI LOSES OR WINS IN BOXING MATCHES, CANNOT AFFECT ON HIS

WORLD FAMOUS PERSONALITY. BDOBSERVER SAID IN ITS EDIT
(FEB.18): "YES, MUHAMMAD ALI HAS LOST TO HIS RIVAL AND HE
COULD NOT SAY WHEN HE WAS MEETING HIM AGAIN. BUT MUHAMMAD
ALI HAS MADE HISTORY IN MORE FIELDS THAN ATHLETICS -- OR
IN THE RING, AND THUS BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST TALKED-
ABOUT PERSONAPITIES."

7. LARGEST CIRCULATED ITTEFAQ (FEB.19) IN ITS FIRST
EDITORIAL SAID: "ALI'S RELIGIOUS EMOTIONS, AND HIS
ANTI-WAR ROLE AS WELL AS HIS ROLE IN DEVELOPING CONDITIONS
OF AMERICAN BLACK MUSLIMS HAS PROVED TIME AND AGAIN THAT
HE IS REALLY A LEGENDARY HERO."

8. POST COMMENT: ALI'S VISIT WAS THE BIGGEST THING TO HIT
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 DACCA 01115 241130Z

BANGLADESH IN MANY A DAY. ALTHOUGH TIRED FROM HIS FIGHT
AND THE LONG TRIP TO DACCA, ALI WAS FRIENDLY AND PERSONABLE
AND APPARENTLY MADE A GOOD IMPRESSION ON EVERYONE. FROM
A PUBLIC RELATIONS VIEWPOINT, ALI IS A WINNER; AMERICA
CANNOT HELP BUT BENEFIT FROM THE GOODWILL AND EXTENSIVE
FAVORABLE PUBLICITY ENGENDERED BY THE VISIT.

MEYER

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS, ATHLETES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DACCA01115
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780086-0026
Format: TEL
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780224/aaaaatrr.tel
Line Count: 143
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3d699ed1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3509944
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MUHAMMAD ALI VISIT
TAGS: SCUL, OTRA, US, BG, (ALI, MUHAMMAD)
To: USIA
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3d699ed1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014